

Triplets Thrive in Program Called 'Hope'

The birth of a new baby is usually a source of joy in a Malawian village. When Kateness Nyafuilwa gave birth to triplets, though, her community in Kaporo realized how difficult it would be to feed and care for the children. Kateness was malnourished herself. She was living alone. Her first husband had died when she was two months pregnant. Her new husband left when he found out she was pregnant with triplets that were not his.



Photo by Kim Del Guercio for CRS

Kateness Nyafuilwa's triplets — Marcelle, Beatta and Dennis.

At birth, the babies each weighed less than 4 ½ pounds. Realizing her predicament Kateness was in, neighbors urged her to put the babies in a basket, walk as far as she could and leave the basket without looking back. Kateness was not willing to do this. She treasured the lives of her children more than the acceptance of her village. With nowhere to turn, Kateness went to the Karonga District Hospital, hoping they would be able to provide food for her and her tiny babies.

Unfortunately, the hospital was not able to help Kateness because they saw that although the children were malnourished, they were not sick. Losing hope, Kateness sat outside the hospital crying until others asked her what was wrong. That's when she found out about the CRS-supported Lusubilo community-based orphan care program, where she has been living ever since.

The triplets — Marcelle, Dennis and Beatta — are now 2 years old and a great source of joy to those staying at Lusubilo. It is hard now to imagine how the center would be without the three children's smiles and laughter. Kateness, too, has been strengthened by her stay at the center. Not only has Lusubilo provided food for the family, the center has taught Kateness skills that will enable her to support herself once she leaves.

Kateness currently works at the Karonga market, selling used clothes with Charity Mkandawire, another Lusubilo mother. They use their profits to expand their business.

Charity's Story

Charity also had nowhere to turn when she first came to Lusubilo. She had fallen sick and had visited a traditional healer. Instead of giving Charity medicine, this man left her pregnant with twin daughters. When the baby girls were born, it was found that Charity was anemic, and she was referred to Lusubilo for treatment. Unfortunately, one of the twins died after three weeks. Her sister, Talumba, continues living a healthy life with the other children at Lusubilo.

The word *Lusubilo* means hope in the local language, Ngonde. There could not be a more fitting name for this center, as it serves as a source of hope for countless individuals in need.

The Lusubilo community-based orphan care program, which is supported in part by Catholic Relief Services, was established in 1997 by Sister Beatrice Chipeta of the Rosarian Sisters in Mzuzu Diocese. The program has expanded to include feeding centers that provide for more than 4,000 children, community-based child-care centers, home-based care, youth programs, vocational training, as well as a nutrition and rehabilitation center. The program is currently providing food for 75 orphan-headed households and plans are in place to double that number.



Photo by Kim Del Guercio for CRS

Charity feeds her daughter Talumba before going to work at the market.